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Message Text

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46
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SY-05 AID-05 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02

SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 /073 W
---------- 125186
R 250833Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7243
INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMASSY PARIS

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, IV, NI
SUB: IVORIAN PROTEST AND NIGERIAN APOLOGY OVER SEARCH
OF IVORY COAST EMBASSYLAGOS

REF: A) ABIDJAN 1727 (NOTAL) B) LAGOS 2079 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: GOIC ISSUED "STRONG AND VEHEMENT" PROTEST FEBRUARY 20
TO NIGERIA OVER FEBRUARY 18 SEARCH OF IVORY COAST EMBASSY LAGOS.
ON FEBRUARY 23 NIGERIA EXPRESSED ITS FORMAL REGRETS OVER INCIDENT.
POLITICAL BUREAU OF PDCI/RDA, IVORY COAST'S ONLY POLITICAL PARTY,
ANNOUNCED LATER IN DAY THAT IVORY COAST ACCEPTED NIGERIA'S APOLOGY
AND CONSIDERED THE MATTER COLSED. END SUMMARY.

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1. FRATERNITE MATIN IN FEBRUARY 21-22 WEEKEND EDITION
CARRIED FRONT-PAGE HEADLINE STORYOF IVORIAN PROTEST
OVER FEB 18 INCIDENT IN WHICH IVORY COAST EMBASSY IN LAGOS
WAS SEARCHED (REFTELS). NIGERIAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN
ABIJAN PATRICK BRAY WAS SUMMONED TO MEETING WITH GOIC
FONMIN USHER FEBRUARY 20 AND ADVISE THE GOIC
"VEHMENTLY AND VIGOROUSLY" PROTESTED THE GON ACTION AND
AWAITED AN EXPLANATION OF THIS "UNFRIENDLY ATTITUDE."

2. COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
FEBRUARY 20 ANNOUNCING IVORIAN PROTEST OVER INCIDENT CONTAINED
FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF EVENTS:

A. IVORIAN CHARGE MEITE IN LAGOS WAS SUMMONED BY NIGERIAN
MEA ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF AFRICAN DEPARTMENT FEBRUARY 18 AND
ADVISED THAT GON INTENDED ENTER IVORIAN EMBASSY LAGOS IN SEARCH
FOR LT. COL. DIMKA:
B. IN SPITE OF ENERGETIC PROTEST BY IVORIAN CHARGE, IVORIAN
EMBASSY WAS SURROUNDED BY SIZEABLE DETACHMENT OF ARMED REGULAR
TROOPS. CHANCERY AND RESIDENCE WERE SEARCHED FROM TOP TO
BOTTON.
C. IVORIAN GOVERNMENT UNDERLINES THAT SIMPLE GOOD SENSE WOULD
HAVE INDICATED THAT AN AFRICAN EMBASSY, PARTICULARLY THAT OF
IVORY COAST, WOULD BE LAST PLACE DIMKA WOULD SEEK
REFUGE. IVORY COAST HAS ALWAYS CONDEMNED ASSASSINATION AS
MEANS OF SEIZING POLITICAL POWER.
D. IN VIEW OF THE GRAVE INCIDENTS OF WHICH IT WAS VICTIM
IN LAGOS, IVORY COAST RAISES VEHEMENT AND VIGOROUS
PROTEST AND CONSIDERS THAT FACT THAT A COUNTRY HAS A LARGE
POPULATION AND BENEFITS FROM PETROLEUM ROYALTIES DOES NOT
CONFER ON IT THE RIGHT TO VIOLATE ELEMENTARY RULES AND
CUSTOM OF INTERNATIONAL LAW;
E. IVORY COAST THEREFORE AWAITS THE EXPLANATIONS OF
NIGERIA OVER THIS UNFRIENDLY ATTITUDE WHICH ASSUREDLY DOES
NOT REPRESENT THE BEST MEANS OF PROMOTING COOPERATION BETWEEN
NEIGHBORING AFRICAN STATES.

3. ON FEB 23, NIGERIAN CHARGE BRAY CALLED ON FONMIN
USHER IN ORDER TO CONVEY NIGERIAN REPLY TO IVORIAN PROTEST.
REPLY WAS DELIVERED INFORM OF NOTE VERBALE. MAIN ELEMENTS
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OF INGERIAN REPLY AS CONTAINED IN COMMUNIQUE PUBLISHED BY
MFA SAME DAY WERE AS FOLLOWS:
A. FMG OF NIGERIA ACKNOWLEDGES HAVING SEARCHED PREMISES OF
IVORY COAST EMBASSY IN LAGOS FEB 18;
B. FMG ACKNOWLEDGES THE "MATERIALITY OFTHE FACTS" WITH WHICH
THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT REPROACHED THE FMG IN ITS PROTEST;
C. FMG RECOGNIZES THE ERRONEOUS CHARACTER OF THE INFORMATION
IT HAD RECEIVED ALLEGING THAT COL. DIMKA HAD TAKEN REFUGE IN

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IVORY COAST EMBASSYLAGOS;
D. AS CONSEQUENCE. FMG EXTENDS TO GOIC ITS PROFOUND REGRET OVER INCIDENT WHICH IT CONSIDERS REGRETTABLE AND HOPES THAT IT WILL NOT AFFECT RELATIONS BETWEEN IVORY COAST AND NIGERIA.

4. LATER ON SAME DAY, FEB 23, POLITICAL BUREAU OF IVORY COAST'S RULING PDCI/RDA, DECIDED TO ACCEPT NIGERIAN APOLOGY. GOIC COMMUNIQUE SAID THAT:
A. TAKING INGO ACCOUNT ITS TRADITIONAL POLICY OF OPENNESS TO OTHER COUNTRIES AND ITS ATTITUDE OF WILLINGNESS TO FORGET OFFENSES, IVORY COAST HAS DECIDED TO ACCEPT THE APOLOGIES OF FMG OF NIGERIA AND TO CONSIDER THE INCIDENTS SURROUNDING THE LAGOS EVENTS COLSED.
B. THE GOIC TRUSTS THAT SIMILAR INCIDENTS WILL NOT RECUR AND EXPRESSES THE WISH THAT THE PEOPLES OF NIGERIA AND IVORY COAST WILL IN THE FUTURE AS IN THE POAST CONTINUE TO LIVE AS TRUE BROTHERS.

5. FEB 24 ISSUE ON FRATERNITE MATIN CARRIES FRONT-APGE STORY OF POLITICAL BUREAU DECISION UNDER HEADLINE "INCIDENT CLOSED."

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH INCIDENT NOW OFFICIALLY CLOSED, ANGER OF IVORIANS FROM HOUPHOUET DOWN (AS REPORTED REF A) OVER SEARCH OF THEIR EMBASSY IN LAGOS IS LIKELY TO CAST A CHILL OVER IVORIAN-NIGERIAN RELATIONS. IN ADDITIONN, WORDING OF NIGERIAN REPLY IN WHICH APOLOGY WAS MADE BECAUSE INFORMATION THAT DIMKA WAS HIDING IN EMBASSYTURNED OUT TO BE FALSE, RATHER THAN APOLOGY FOR INVASION OF DIPOLMATIC PREMISES UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES MAY HAVE BEEN LESS THAN TOTALLY REASSURING TO IVORIANS THAT INCIDENT COULD NEVER BE REPEATED.
SMITH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC PROTESTS, DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ABIDJA01843
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760070-0936
From: ABIDJAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760217/aaaaanua.tel
Line Count: 146
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 ABIDJAN 1727
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 APR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <06 JUL 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IVORIAN PROTEST AND NIGERIAN APOLOGY OVER SEARCH OF IVORY COAST EMBASSYLAGOS
TAGS: PFOR, IV, NI
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006